

JOHNSON AND AIDES MEET WITH LODGE ON VIETNAM POLICY

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Thorough Review of Every
Aspect of Situation Held at
White House Meeting

'VERY PROFITABLE VISIT'

President Discloses Little
but Says He Received
Views of 'Wise Men'

By TOM WICKER

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WASHINGTON, May 10 —

President Johnson and the highest Administration officials met with Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge late today for a review of the military, economic and political situation in South Vietnam.

Although few details were disclosed, one obvious subject for the group's attention was the outlook for the constituent-assembly elections that will be held in South Vietnam early this fall.

At the end of the hour-and-a-half meeting, Mr. Johnson called it "a very profitable visit."

As he spoke to reporters who had been summoned to the Cabinet Room, Mr. Johnson was flanked by Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara. Most of the other high foreign policy and military officials of the Administration sat in a crowded ring around the long Cabinet table.

"I explained to these wise men that I wanted them to supply me with all the information they had," the President said, smiling. "I have it now and I've passed it on to you as much as I could."

Lodge Home for Week

In fact, Mr. Johnson "passed on" very little except that Mr. Lodge and the other officials had exchanged reviews of the "key issues" in the political and economic fields in Vietnam as well as the military situation.

Mr. Lodge, the Ambassador to Saigon, is here for perhaps a week of consultations.

Mr. Johnson, during the weekend at his Texas ranch,



Associated Press Wirephoto

DISCUSSING VIETNAM: Henry Cabot Lodge, left, U.S. Ambassador to South Vietnam, conferring yesterday with Secretary of State Rusk in the Secretary's office in capital.

arrived early this afternoon with the meeting with Mr. Lodge first on his schedule.

The two men met privately at about 5 P.M. in the President's office. At 5:50 P.M. they moved to the Cabinet Room for a meeting with what a White House spokesman called the National Security Council.

Earlier today Mr. Johnson also met with Farris Bryant, the director of the Office of Emergency Planning, and his special assistant, Robert Kinter, to discuss "stockpile matters". Mr. Bryant and Mr. Kinter also attended the Cabinet Room meeting.

Mr. Lodge conferred separately for an hour and a half this morning with Mr. Rusk and other State Department officials.

When the President called reporters to the Cabinet Room at the conclusion of the meeting, he did not submit to questioning. Instead he gave a brief account of the subjects discussed.

He had sought Mr. Lodge's evaluation of the situation in South Vietnam, he said, and welcomed his "judgment and counsel."

The Ambassador had not been in the United States for a long time, Mr. Johnson said.

Mr. Lodge broke in at this point. "Since last August," he said. "Almost nine months."

"Almost nine months," Mr. Johnson repeated.

President said the agenda had

included a "rather full report" from Gen. Earle G. Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on the war situation in Vietnam.

Then Mr. Lodge reported on the "key issues" in the political and economic fields "as he sees them," Mr. Johnson said. Mr. Rusk followed with a discussion of the political situation, and Mr. McNamara supplemented General Wheeler's military report.

Mr. Johnson said he had then "reviewed with them some of my views" — views he said he had held since taking over the Presidency — about the importance of progress in education, health and the economy.

He reviewed his April, 1965, speech in Baltimore, in which he outlined a massive aid program for Southeast Asia, spoke of decisions reached at the Honolulu conference with South Vietnamese officials in February and emphasized the importance of getting cooperation between the South Vietnamese and the Africans in the economic and social fields.

A White House special assistant, Robert Komer, whom Mr. Johnson has placed in charge of coordinating such efforts, also discussed the key economic issues at some length, the President said.

The Cabinet room meeting broke up immediately after the President had reviewed the agenda for the reporters.

Mr. Johnson will meet with Mr. Lodge at least once more before the Ambassador returns to Saigon.

Mr. Lodge has a continuing round of individual conferences on his schedule, and Capitol Hill sources said he would testify Friday at a closed session of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Others in the Cabinet Room were:

Under Secretary of State George W. Ball; Deputy Secretary of Defense Cyrus Vance; the Secretary of the Treasury, Henry H. Fowler; the United Nations representative, Arthur H. Goldberg; Adm. William F. Raborn, Director of Central Intelligence; Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor, the President's military adviser; Leonard H. Marks, director of the United States Information Agency.

Also William P. Bundy, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs; Leonard Unger, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs; William S. Gaud, deputy director of the Agency for International Development; John T. McNaughton, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, and Richard Helms, deputy C.I.A. director.

Vice President Humphrey also attended the meeting, as did two other White House special assistants, Bill D. Moyers and Walt W. Rostow.

Edwin D. Lansdale, an expert on guerrilla warfare and pacification programs, and Philip Habib, both of Ambassador Lodge's staff, sat in on the